



State of Illinois  
Illinois Deaf and Hard of  
Hearing Commission



# Annual Report 2019

Fiscal Year July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019



## Illinois Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission

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[www.idhhc.illinois.gov](http://www.idhhc.illinois.gov)

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# THE COMMISSION

The Illinois Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission (IDHHC) is an executive state agency that advocates on behalf of the interests of persons in Illinois who are deaf or hard of hearing.

## COMMISSIONERS

The Commission is governed by eleven (11) Commissioners. The Commissioners are appointed by the Governor's Office and represent different geographical areas of Illinois.

<b>Dennis O'Brien</b>	–	Wheaton (Chairperson)
<b>Amy Blough</b>	–	Peoria
<b>Joseph Culpepper</b>	–	Bloomington
<b>Susan Dramin-Weiss</b>	–	Champaign
<b>David Frazier</b>	–	University Park
<b>Lori Krakora</b>	–	Naperville
<b>Jarom Matheson</b>	–	Chicago
<b>Joseph Obermaier</b>	–	Oak Brook
<b>Bryen Yunashko</b>	–	Chicago

## STAFF

The Commission is operated by a team of dedicated staff members.

<b>Tonia Bogener</b>	-	Interim Director
<b>Dana Craig</b>	-	Program Coordinator
<b>Patty Greene</b>	-	Personnel Manager
<b>Janet Lambert</b>	-	Interpreter Coordinator
<b>Lee Taylor</b>	-	Office Assistant

## INTERPRETER FOR THE DEAF PROGRAM

The Commission operates the Interpreter for the Deaf Program that includes Interpreter Licensing and BEI Certification in accordance to the Interpreter for the Deaf Licensure Act of 2007. The Interpreter Licensure Board provides recommendations to the Commission Director on issues related to the Interpreter for the Deaf Licensure Act of 2007. Information about the sign language interpreters including board members of the Interpreter Licensure Board and Interpreter Licensing and BEI Certification during the fiscal year can be found on Pages 9, 10, and 11.



## Mission Statement

*The Illinois Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission shall promote system change, community education and collaboration to advance effective communication access for all individuals with hearing loss in Illinois.*

## Objectives

The Illinois Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission (IDHHC) promotes education and awareness about hearing loss and the legal requirements for effective communication on behalf of people with hearing loss in Illinois.

The Commission strives to promote independence for individuals with hearing loss by providing technical assistance and training to enhance public and private programs, and by making legislative and policy recommendations to assure accessibility.

The Commission provides statewide resources to assist the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind community in Illinois. The Commission also regulates licensure for sign language interpreters and maintain an online directory of all licensed Illinois sign language interpreters.

## Core Functions

- Promote independence for individuals with a hearing loss
- Increase quality and number of sign language interpreters
- Provide educational awareness regarding hearing loss
- Provide statewide resources

## Vision Statement

*All Illinois residents with a hearing loss will enjoy the benefits of a fully accessible society enabling each person to participate in and contribute to all aspects of life.*

## History

In 1995, various leaders in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community started discussing the desire for a governmental body to focus on the needs of individuals with hearing loss. This group developed into a Task Force to lobby for the formation of a new state agency.

The Governor issued an amendatory veto to legislation establishing Illinois Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission (IDHHC) as a state agency and changed it to an advisory committee under the Department of Human Services. Based on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community outcry, the House and Senate both overrode the Governor's veto. While officially established on January 1, 1997, IDHHC opened its office in November 1998, when the first Director was hired.

# PROGRAM & OPERATIONS

## Statewide Services, Resources, and Information

The Commission provides statewide services, resources, and information about Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind. During the Fiscal Year 2019, the Commission received 15,774 public inquiries and provided requested information and referral as appropriate to individuals, and public and private entities for issues including, but not limited to, accessibility and accommodation issues, advocacy organizations, assistive technology, centers on independent living, discrimination complaints, educational options, service and resource availability, sign language interpreters and communication access, telecommunication equipment, and state Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program. On an ongoing basis, the Commission reviews federal and state statutes, regulations, and policies regarding Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind.

## Community Outreach & Collaboration

The Commission promotes outreach effort to all Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind communities to increase visibility and awareness of the Commission program and operations. Some of the highlights during the Fiscal Year 2019, the Commission attended Nation Deaf Expo in Chicago; Illinois School for the Deaf Career Day; and Illinois School for the Deaf Parent-Infant Institute. The Commission has presented and participated at the following meetings: Early Hearing Detection Intervention's Pre-Conference at Illinois Teachers for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing; Illinois Supervisor for the Hearing-Impaired Meetings; Moraine Valley Community College, and the Illinois Association of the Deaf Conference.

## Technical Assistance, Consultation, & Training Support

The Commission provides technical assistance, consultation, and training support to improve access to public and private programs and services for persons who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind. One of the highlights during the Fiscal Year 2019, the Commission hosted training for school administrators and parents focused on the special education laws and development of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). The Commission continues to educate service providers and employers of their obligations to provide effective communication under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

**6691**

***Number of Communication Visor Cards Distributed***

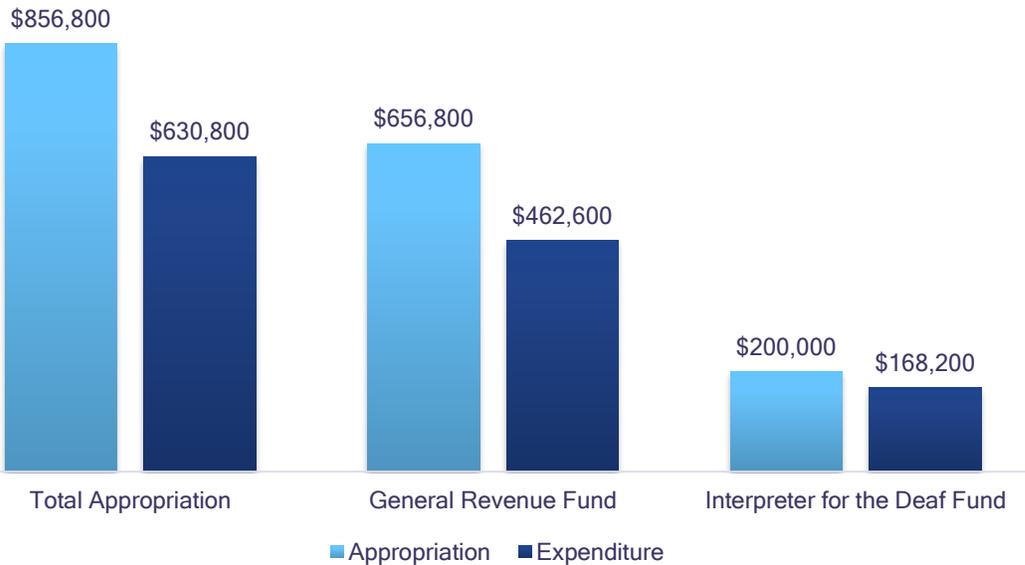
## Communication Visor Cards

The Commission created the Communication Visor Card to bridge the communication gap between the deaf community and law enforcement in Illinois. This project was made through a cooperative effort with the Illinois Secretary of State and Achieving Independence and Mobility (AIM) Center for Independent Living. A total of 6,691 Communication Visor Card were distributed to all state, local, and municipal law enforcement agencies in Illinois, and Center for Independent Livings, Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf, organizations, and individuals.

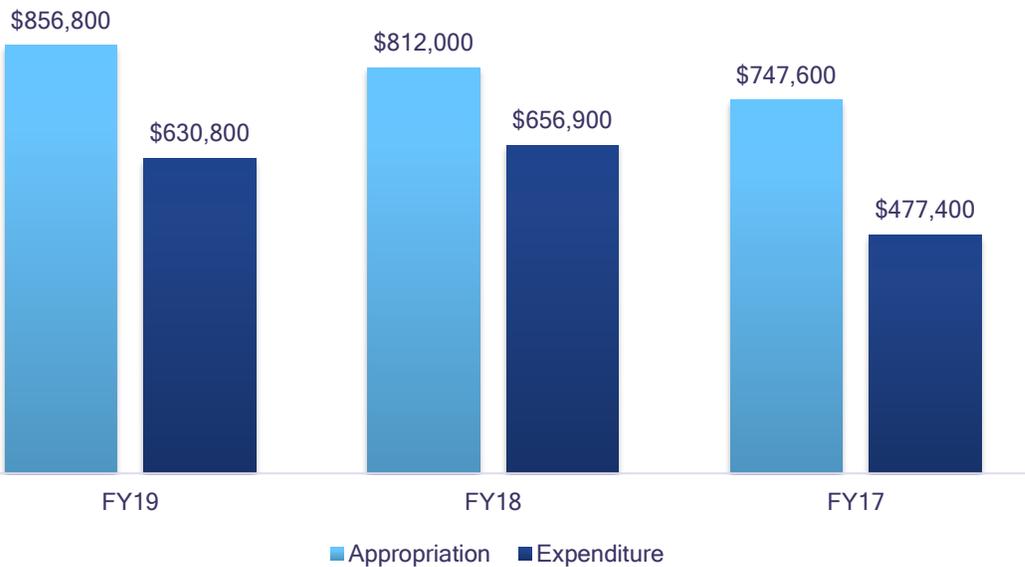
# COMMISSION BUDGET

## \$856,800

### Fiscal Year 2019 Appropriation & Expenditure



### Appropriations & Expenditures History



## BY THE NUMBERS

	FY19	FY18	FY17
Public Inquiries	15,774	13,317	11,373
Educational and Informational Materials Distributed	23,472	7,040	20,188
Interpreters Participated in IDHHC Sponsored or Hosted Professional Development Opportunities	1,513	428	203
Communication Visor Cards Distributed	6,691	N/A	N/A
Subscribers to IDHHC Electronic Mail Communications	652	640	590

**23472**

*Number of Educational Information and Materials Distributed*

### Legislative Bills & Resolutions

The Illinois General Assembly's main functions include enacting, amending or repealing laws; passing resolutions; adopting spending bills; and examining proposed legislation. During the legislative session, thousands of bills and resolutions were introduced in the areas of government, education, regulation, human needs, health and safety, agriculture and conversation, transportation, rights and remedies, and business and employment. The Commission monitors bills and resolutions that are relevant to the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind communities in Illinois. The Commission also provides a list of relevant bills and resolutions to the public on the website for informational purposes only and does not necessarily reflect the Commission's position. During the Fiscal Year 2019, some bills became laws that effect the needs of Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind population. Visit the Commission website for a list of bills that became Public Acts.

# SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS

The Commission is a licensing body responsible for the enforcement of the Interpreter for the Deaf Licensure Act of 2007. The Commission also administers the Illinois Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI) certification test; maintains an online directory of all licensed interpreters by proficiency levels, geographic regions, counties, and contact information; and conducts investigation of alleged violations and in cases of substantiated allegations, various voluntary corrective measures are used including imposition of discipline when appropriate.

## INTERPRETER LICENSURE BOARD MEMBERS

The Interpreter Licensure Board consists of seven (7) members appointed by the IDHHC Director. The Board is composed of four (4) licensed interpreters for the deaf and three (3) deaf or hard of hearing consumers and the IDHHC Interpreter Coordinator. The Board provides recommendations to the IDHHC Director on issues related to the Interpreter for the Deaf Licensure Act of 2007.

<b>Laura Braucht</b>	–	<b>Jacksonville</b> (Chairperson)
<b>Michele Cunningham</b>	–	<b>Chicago</b>
<b>Donna Elliott</b>	–	<b>Creston</b>
<b>Barbara Pacourek</b>	–	<b>Brookfield</b>
<b>Debby Sampson</b>	–	<b>Glenview</b>

### STAFF

<b>Janet Lambert</b>	–	<b>Interpreter Coordinator</b>
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**1513**

*Number of Interpreters Participated in IDHHC  
Sponsored or Hosted Professional Development Opportunities*

## Annual Interpreter Conference

The Commission hosted the Annual Interpreter Conference at the University of Illinois at Springfield (UIS). The annual conference offers professional development for licensed sign language interpreters with continuing education accredited workshops. A total of 92 licensed sign language interpreters participated in the conference.

**2019 Annual  
Interpreter  
Conference**  
92 Participants

# Illinois Interpreter Licensing & BEI Certification

	FY19	FY18	FY17
Total Licensing & BEI Applications	1,259	1,252	1,228

## Illinois Interpreter Licensing Statistics

# 811

Licensed Interpreters

# 113

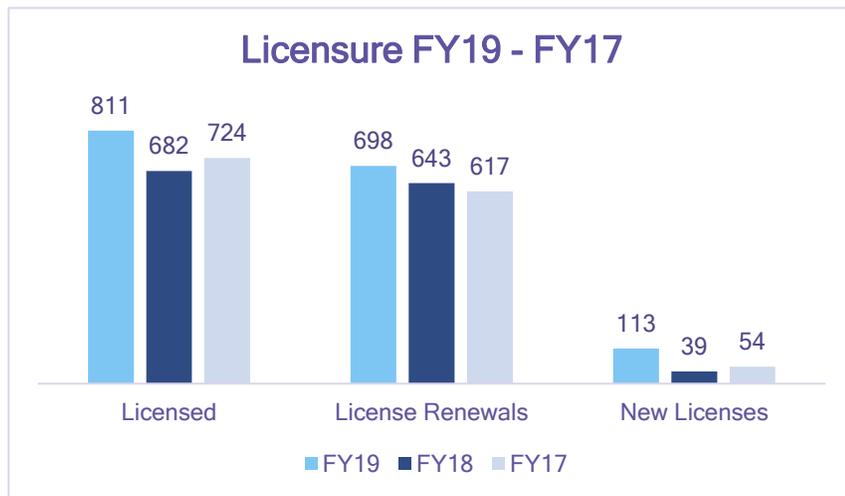
New Licenses

# 698

License Renewals

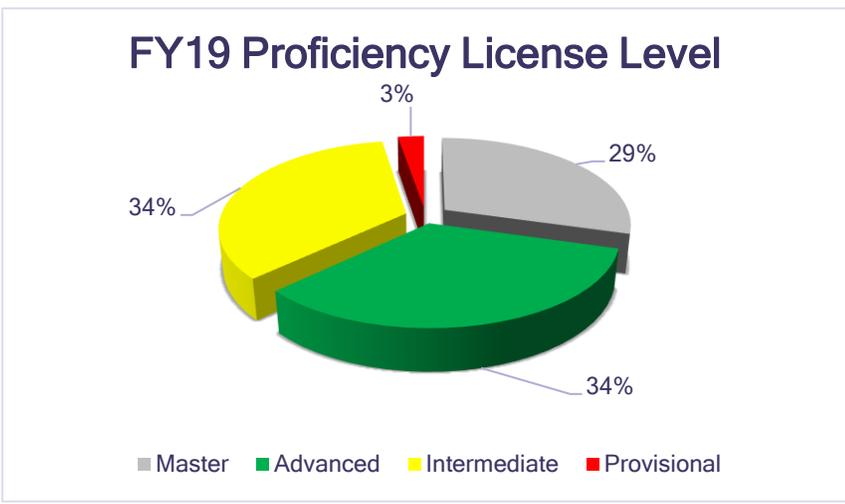
# 15

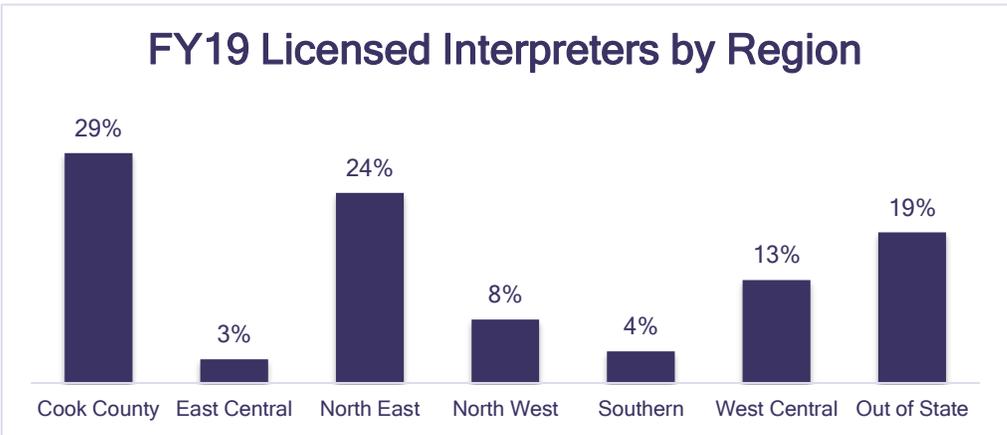
Proficiency Level Upgrades



**What's New?**

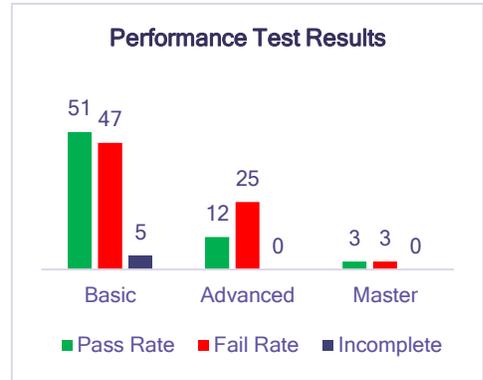
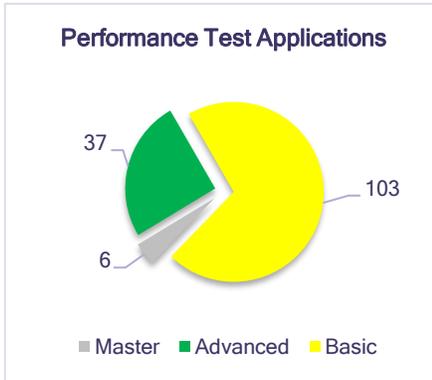
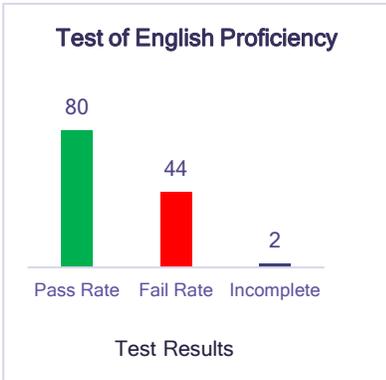
The Commission issued over 800 licenses in the fiscal year 2019.





### BEI Testing and Certification Statistics

	FY19		FY18		FY17	
<b>BEI Certification Tests Administered</b>	<b>272</b>		<b>300</b>		<b>287</b>	
<b>Test of English Proficiency</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>133</b>
<b>Performance Test</b>						



### Illinois Interpreter Training & Interpreter Preparation Programs

- College of DuPage, Glen Ellyn
- Columbia College Chicago, Chicago
- Illinois Central College, East Peoria
- John A. Logan College, Carterville
- \*Quincy University, Quincy
- \*William Rainey Harper College, Palatine

- Moraine Valley Community College, Palos Hills
- Southwestern Illinois College, Belleville
- Waubensee Community College, Aurora
- \*MacMurray College, Jacksonville
- \*Richland Community College, Decatur

\*Denotes Program Suspended or Closed



Electronic Publication available at [www.idhhc.illinois.gov](http://www.idhhc.illinois.gov)

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